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WILL LATIN FOLLOW GREEK OUT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL¹

We are told not only by professional reformers but also by many accredited educationists and other serious-minded men that this is the age of vocational training and that it is very much a question how much of the old-time education should still have a place in our educational system. At the same time the economic and social unrest in our country today finds expression in dissatisfaction not only with conditions of labor and rewards for service, but also with the system of education which prepares for service. The almost universal cry is for education that will be more 'practical', education that will fit the boy and girl 'for life', and especially for economic independence at an early age. So insistent has the cry become that even the better class of magazines and the latest books on education have taken it up, until now we are fairly deluged with criticism of the old type of education and with all kinds of theories for a new one—until new definitions of education and new conceptions of the educated man have come in to take the place of the older views.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that, in deference to public agitation and public demand, the curriculum of the public schools has been changing rapidly. In the elementary schools the tendency has been to devote less time to some of the book subjects, like geography and spelling, and more time to those training the hand and the eye, such as drawing, cooking, sewing, and sloyd work. In the High Schools, too, a like change has been going on. The study of Greek has declined so fast during the past decade that the number of students taking it has fallen from 39 to 13 per thousand, an almost negligible number. Physics, physical geography, physiology, and civics have also lost ground, while zoology, agriculture, and domestic science, studies not in the curriculum at all a dozen years ago, have sprung into prominence². In fact, new subjects are being added to the curriculum almost every day. Household economy, cooking, sewing, millinery, and allied subjects, for girls, and manual training, shop work, metal working, and

the rudiments of some of the trades, for boys, are a few of the subjects which have 'enriched' the course.

At a time, then, when even some of the sciences are suffering heavy losses on account of the inroads of the new subjects, it behooves us to take thought about the subject in which we are especially interested. Where does Latin stand now and what are its chances for the future? The latest statistics tell us that Latin is holding its own surprisingly well in the nation at large. In 1900, 499 out of every 1000 public High School students were studying Latin. Ten years later, the number had decreased but 4 in every thousand, leaving the percentage practically unchanged. The figures also show that Latin stands up well with the leading subjects, English, algebra, and history, and nearly equals the combined strength of its nearest competitors, geometry and German³. Judging from these facts, there would seem to be necessary little concern for the future; but, knowing as we do the temper of our people, and hearing the repeated attacks of men in high station upon all the traditional subjects, and acknowledging, as we must, the truth of the accusation that the teaching of Latin has been, in large measure, very poor and its results very meager, we cannot help being solicitous for the outcome.

Without assuming an alarmist attitude, let us calmly review the situation. Latin is, apparently, holding its own, but we have good reason to fear that the constant attacks of men who are fighting for general recognition of the so-called 'practical' subjects will bear fruit in deadly hostility on the part of superficial-thinking converts to the new thought. It has been ever thus. The pendulum of public opinion, impelled by the power of a new idea, may swing too far and impair, if not destroy, the efficiency of a delicately balanced, carefully planned educational system.

The United States Commissioner of Education has evidently foreseen the danger which confronts us and wisely sounds a note of warning in his 1911 report (i.16-17: the italics are mine):

In recent years a great deal of criticism has been heaped upon the schools for their alleged lack of

¹ This paper was read before the Classical Section of The New York State Teachers' Association in convention at Buffalo, November 26, 1912.

² See the 1911 Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1.9.

³ The 1911 Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1.9, gives the following numbers per 1000 public High School students for the year 1910: English literature 570, algebra 569, rhetoric 566, general history 556, geometry 308, German 236.

a practical sort of education. Much of this criticism has been just, but *the most practical thing in life is not money getting nor even skill in a trade*. The American people need to be reminded frequently that along with this educative practical contact with the ordinary duties of life *there is also need for that inspiration and culture which comes from an intimate knowledge of the ideals, aspirations, and wisdom of the human spirit at its best*.

It is our business, then, to remind the people that 'specific training in some useful and fundamental present-day occupation' must be supplemented by studies that will give "inspiration and culture". We have no quarrel with the so-called 'practical' studies. There is room for them all in our liberal democratic curriculum. Let those students elect them who will. But we have a right to compare the subjects of study, to present the claims and to urge the election of those which can be shown to be superior to others in the long run, and to try to prevent the education of our boys and girls from becoming one-sided. Since this is so, and since the claims of certain subjects which appeal strongly to voluntary interest are being unduly stressed, as it seems to us, to the disadvantage of other subjects less favored by immediate, tangible results, it is our duty to defend the latter and to bring their advantages to the attention of the public. To put it more specifically, it is our business to show the people that Latin is a thoroughly practical subject and one which will give that inspiration and culture of which the Commissioner speaks.

How shall we go about it? It seems to me that the first thing to do is to take the sting out of the criticisms of the reformers, and at the same time ease the minds of those who have been led to think that there is such antagonism between Latin and vocational studies that the former must go, if the latter are to be received into the curriculum. To do this, we must give wide publicity to the fact that some of the up-to-date reformers do not mean exactly what the newspapers and the general tenor of their writings often seem to imply. I have some first-hand evidence in the matter. A good friend of mine, the classically trained principal of one of the largest vocational High Schools in the country, has been writing a series of very interesting articles on various phases of the New Education. In two of these, the assault upon Latin and the other culture subjects, as they are termed, was so severe and the character of the illustrations so misleading that one might easily get the impression that the writer was unalterably opposed to the study of Latin by the great majority of High School students. And yet I knew that he had no such antipathy, for he had just written me a letter in defence of his attitude toward the Classics in an earlier series of articles. In this letter he made the following explanation:

I have tried to make plain, although I have very often been misinterpreted, that the new movement

is not hostile to the Classics in any sense. It simply contends that we must give to the pupils who do not want to or who cannot master the traditional subjects an opportunity to profit by public education along lines adapted to their personal needs. This is all that I have ever contended for, and if I have been compelled to throw bricks at Latin and mathematics it is simply because so many good people could not see that anything else was education.

It seems to me that such a confession as this ought to be given as wide publicity as the articles which are sandbagging the Latin, so that people in general may not take them too seriously and be tempted to murder the prostrate subject.

As soon as we have cleared the ground a little by the introduction of such an explanation as this, we can proceed to show that Latin is thoroughly practical in the best sense of the word. In the first place, the study of Latin makes for character. As one clear thinker has pointed out⁴,

That education is 'practical' which deals with objects most certain to be met with in life and those objects are human beings; the science of understanding them is what we mean by literature. Those studies are practical which have the practical effect of shaping the character for the practical purpose of human intercourse, of making us more flexible, more imaginative, more humorous, straighter thinkers and more pleasant companions.

Another thinker says practically the same thing in language even more convincing⁵:

To my mind that which teaches a boy to reason soundly and to express that reasoning in clear, accurate and forceful English, that which teaches him to be master of himself in whatever channel he may direct his energies, that which makes for character and power, is the practical education.

The men who wrote these words are, as you may guess, champions of the Classics. But that you may know that thinking men outside of our faculty, men who have been making a special, unbiassed study of the problem of education, uphold them in their contention, let me quote you the words of Mr. James P. Munroe, the well-known business man and educational expert of the Boston Chamber of Commerce. In his late book he says⁶:

Acknowledging, as every one must, that the road to good fortune, no matter whether it be in business, in poetry or in politics, is thickly strewn with disagreeable tasks, and that, as a rule, the greater the prize, the more unpleasant and apparently thankless the preliminary labor, it is plain that a man, if he is to amount to anything, must have his will in such training that it will lead his body and his mind to the doing of the worst drudgery, to the facing of the most unpleasant odds, to the accomplishment of what he sets out to do, no matter how many lions stand roaring and clawing in his path.

A little farther on (173) he says:

⁴Mr. T. C. Snow, late fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, in his little book entitled *How to Save Greek and other Paradoxes of Oxford Reform*, quoted by Professor Lodge in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4.82.

⁵Dr. B. W. Mitchell, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 6.27.
⁶*New Demands in Education*, 138 (Doubleday, Page and Company, 1912).

Physical fibre, mental fibre, moral fibre are what education exists to develop in the child; and this fibre can be built up, toughened and made good for something only by a judicious, daily application of the rod. Not, of course, by the actual rod of the proverbial pedagogue, but by the subtle, invisible, though none the less efficacious, rod of hard work, real persistent effort, and steady discipline. The old education . . . with its Latin grammar, and more Latin grammar and still more Latin grammar, produced a hard-headed, hard-fisted, hard-hearted race, but it was, in the main, a race sound physically, mentally, and morally. Many of the new methods of gentle cooing towards the child's inclinations, of timidly placing a chair for him before a disordered banquet of heterogeneous studies, may produce lady-like persons, but they will not produce men.

There is no doubt about it, the study of Latin makes men, the kind of men that our country needs more than anything else in these times of great social and economic problems—thinking men, men of action, men of judgment. Even the new psychology, triumphing over the cruder notions of the old, bears us out⁷ in thinking that, if once a child forms a habit of concentrating its mind on a subject which for the most part may not lend itself to voluntary interest, it will be able to fix its attention on other unrelated but perhaps equally difficult or equally uninteresting subjects. The study of Latin for the High School beginner under present conditions is not easy. I doubt sometimes whether it can be made so. But if a boy can so train his sense of duty that he will prepare his Latin lesson carefully and to the best of his ability day after day, the time will soon come when he can devote himself to any difficult, uninteresting, even disagreeable tasks which need to be done. The men who are making their mark in the world today are, for the most part, the men who have been stiffened to their tasks by this same hard study, Latin.

Again, Latin is a practical subject in that it leads preeminently to mental discipline, or, as Professor Kelsey terms it, training in scientific method. Here, too, our case is pleaded so well by disinterested educational experts that we are minded to use their words in preference to our own. Although we might easily fill our pages with the testimony of these unprejudiced witnesses, let us content ourselves with quoting but one or two. Professor Grandgent, of the Harvard Modern Language Department, speaking on the subject *Is Modern Language Teaching A Failure?* said⁸:

The modern tongues have been introduced into schools and colleges as a partial or total substitute for the classics. Now, as I have said before, it is through the classics that the man of European stock from ancient times, almost until our own day, has received his mental discipline: it is they that have taught him how to observe, how to discriminate,

how to reason, how to remember; . . . they have cultivated the taste and broadened the horizon. It is they that have given man the intellectual power to cope with any problem that may confront him; it is they that have made him an educated being. Among the other topics that our children study, mathematics stands forth as affording a part, but only a part, of the necessary discipline; they teach concentration and accuracy but not much more. . . . Natural science and the host of minor subjects recently adopted, while they impart interesting and sometimes valuable information, furnish none of the requisite training for the shaping of that strong, versatile, well-rounded intelligence without which civilized man will relapse into barbarism.

It would be difficult to improve upon such comprehensive tribute to the value of Latin in mental development. But just to show that such sentiments are thoroughly abreast of the times, let us quote the words of Mr. Munroe (184) as a kind of corollary to what Professor Grandgent has said:

It is but natural for the new education to exalt its own newness and to decry the old fashion of the former ways. No change of fashion, however, can alter eternal principles; and what was good, what was fundamental in the ancient methods will endure, will prove itself indispensable, will eventually re-take in all schools that place which in the best schools it has never lost.

Finally, the study of Latin is practical in that it prepares a good foundation for advanced study and for higher living in the leisure years of life. One of the members of the Ithaca (N. Y.) Board of Aldermen printed in the *Ithaca Daily News* of April 27, 1911, a statement, signed by fifty representative professors and instructors in English, German, French, Semitic languages, science, mathematics, and engineering in Cornell University, which is a striking tribute to the disciplinary value of the Classics⁹. That statement was to the effect that those professors and instructors of practically all of the different faculties in the University preferred that students coming to them be prepared in the Classics rather than in their own special lines of work. To the man who has come to look upon the study of Latin as a practical preparation for only the so-called learned professions of law, medicine, theology, and teaching, it must be a distinct surprise to learn that Latin is considered by scientists the very best possible preparation for courses in engineering.

We need not dwell on the self-evident fact that the science of law, with its Latin origin, its pure Latin terminology, and its constant demands upon the judgment, can best be mastered by thorough training in Latin. Neither need we waste words in discussing the admitted value in medicine of classically-trained accuracy and precision of observation in experimental work and at the bedside of the patient. But, passing quickly over the supreme value of Latin in original investigation of the sources

⁷ James Rowland Angell, *Doctrine of Formal Discipline in the Light of the Principles of General Psychology*, in Kelsey's *Latin and Greek in American Education*, 359.

⁸ *The School Review* 15.526 (quoted by Professor Knapp in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4.76).

⁹ It was quoted in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4.207. For a similar statement by professors of the University of Cincinnati see *The Classical Journal* 8.353.

in theology and in the preparation of the efficient teacher, a value which nobody thinks of denying, let us come at once to its less widely known use in applied science.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in its annual catalogue has long advised its candidates for admission in these words:

The study of Latin is strongly recommended to persons who purpose to enter the Institute, since, in addition to its disciplinary value, it gives a better understanding of the various terms used in Science and greatly facilitates the acquisition of the modern languages.

Again, Bauer, the distinguished chemist of the Hohe Technische Schule in Vienna, prefers the Latin-trained students of the classical Gymnasien to the product of the Real-Schulen who have had preliminary training in chemistry. He is quoted¹⁰ as saying that the students of the Real-Schulen do best at first, but after three months' time they are, as a rule, left behind by those coming from the Gymnasien. The reason he gives for this fact is significant: "Because the latter have the best trained minds".

So necessary, in fact, is training in at least one of the classical languages considered in preparation for college entrance that President Schurman is reported¹¹ as saying that if there were danger of wholesale desertion of Latin on account of its abolition as an entrance requirement, it would be restored immediately to the status of prescription.

But, even if the student goes no farther than the High School, the study of Latin will be worth while in the power it gives over the grammar and the vocabulary of English and over the wealth of historical and mythological allusion upon which depends so much of the charm of English literature. You need not be reminded that nearly forty per cent of the Bible and of Shakespeare and a still greater percentage of Milton's writing is of Latin origin¹². Nor need a word be said about the power even the simplest Latin vocabulary gives over English orthography and over many of our apparently formidable sesquipedalian polysyllables. But your attention should be called to the results of a very interesting investigation conducted by Professor Sherman of the English Department in the University of Illinois. These results, deduced from a large number of cases, were so uniform that they may be stated in the form of laws¹³:

(A) A student's power over the English dictionary varies directly with the number of years in which he has studied Latin.

(B) A student's acquaintance with the common-places of classical allusion varies directly with the

number of years in which he has studied Latin.

(C) A student's ability to read a page of Shakespeare varies directly with the number of years in which he has studied Latin.

But even though we prove to our own satisfaction and to the satisfaction of every one else that Latin is a thoroughly practical subject, that it builds strong characters and inflexible wills, that it trains in logical and scientific processes, that it is very valuable as a preparation for the applied sciences, that it is almost a *sine qua non* as a preparation for law, medicine, theology, and teaching, that it makes the acquisition of English and the Romance languages easy, that it opens wide the gate to the beauties and the pleasures of English literature, that it makes for inspiration and culture, there is still danger that Latin may be lost. If we wish students to elect Latin in this day and age, we must teach it with vigor and enthusiasm, making use of many of the methods which the best teachers are employing in the modern languages, in history and in science. In the first place, as Professor Knapp points out, "We must rid the classroom of the incompetent, the lazy, the dull, and the lifeless teacher". We must avoid that type of teaching which is denominated stale and unprofitable from the point of view of modern educational thought. Then, without emasculating the subject by removing its strenuous, brain-developing difficulty, we must vitalize our teaching by appeals to the senses and to the interests of our students by drawing comparisons between the ancient civilization and that of our own time, as Professor Ferrero is doing for the country at large, by securing the cooperation and enthusiastic initiative of those in our classes. More specifically, we must have in our departments and use books, maps, charts, slides, and pictures to illustrate our work and to awaken interest in it. We must have classical clubs, classical plays, and the speaking and writing of Latin, not only for social purposes but more especially to root out the feeling that Latin is dead and cannot be employed as a medium for present-day exchange of thought. We must lay the foundation for a deeper knowledge and appreciation of English by dwelling on the fundamental principles of artistic construction in our study of Cicero, Sallust, Vergil, and Ovid, by studying parallel passages in the English classics, and by visualizing the life and customs and basic myths of the Latins and the Greeks, to the end that we may liberalize and broaden our students and set up within them ideals of thought and expression which will remain with them as long as they live and which will serve as touchstones for all they write or read or speak or hear.

To sum it all up in a few words, our teaching must be of such a character that our students shall not only derive the practical benefits inherent in the study of Latin but also experience the joys of awakened

¹⁰ Ramsay, *Efficiency in Education*, 21 (Glasgow, 1902).

¹¹ By Professor A. O. Norton, of Harvard University in *The Present Position of Latin and Greek* (The Nation, October 4, 1906).

¹² See Professor Stuart P. Sherman, *English and the Latin Question*, *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 5.202.

¹³ See *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 5.211.

interest, of conscious development, and of personal achievement, and that they shall be so thoroughly imbued with the lasting pleasures of literature that they will never feel themselves dependent upon the transient, unsatisfying diversions of those who know not the pleasures of the mind.

If the type of our teaching changes to conform to this new ideal, and if we teach Latin in this practical, vital way, and if we take it upon ourselves to spread among the people the just claims of Latin, there is no doubt that Latin will continue to hold its own in the High School.

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SOME GREEK AND LATIN ETYMOLOGIES

"Etymology", said the late Professor Skeat, "depends no longer upon barefaced and irresponsible assertion, but has been raised to the dignity of a science". Now it is of the nature of science to pay attention to a host of seemingly unimportant details and laboriously to examine a problem from every side before pronouncing a decision. Most sciences, besides, find it necessary to employ a system of technical terms and symbols. Consequently, as etymological writing has become more exact, it has become more difficult and less interesting to the layman. It may be worth while, then, to select a few interesting results of the detailed and technical discussions in recent periodicals.

1. ODIUM

See Skutsch, *Glotta* 2(1910).230 ff.; Landgraf, *Glotta* 3(1911).51; Walde, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 28(1911).396 ff.; Skutsch, *Glotta* 3(1911).285 ff.; Walde, *Indogermanische Forschungen* 30(1912).139 f.

In only 3 of the 37 occurrences in Plautus can *odium* naturally be translated by 'hate'. It means rather 'disgust', as in *Curculio* 501:

Odio et malo et molestiae, bono usui estis nulli.

In this and many other places the word has a force more primitive than the meaning 'hate'. *Odium*, *odi*, etc., are ultimately akin to *odor*, and the more concrete meaning is, as usual, the older. The meaning 'hate' developed from the meaning 'smell' in Indo-European times, as is shown by Greek *ὀδύσσομαι*, 'hate', but in Latin the connection between the two meanings was never lost from the linguistic consciousness. *Odium* was always associated with *odor*, and that is the reason why it serves so readily as a term of abuse in Plautus and Terence. After Artemona in the *Asinaria* (893 ff.) has overheard her husband complain of her unsavory breath, she repels his conciliatory *Iam obsecro, uxor* with the words *Modo . . . odium, non uxor eram*. Even in Cicero *odiosus* is often coupled with *molestus* in such a way as to require the translation 'disgusting' rather than 'hateful'.

2. PONTIFEX

Pontifex (see Kent, *Classical Philology* 8(1913).317 ff.) was connected by the ancients with *pons* and *facere*—and very plausibly too, since the *pontifices* built and repaired the *Pons Sublicius*, the earliest and long the only bridge across the Tiber at Rome. It is, however, scarcely credible that so important a priestly College originated at so late a date as the bridging of the Tiber—in fact the Roman tradition puts the organization of the College two reigns earlier than the building of the bridge. Neither is it probable that the first *pontifices* were the builders of other bridges—say bridges over the streams that had to be crossed by the primitive Italians during their southward migration. Migrating tribes would rather ford the streams or cross on rafts.

The word *pons* originally meant what is denoted by *पथ*, Sanskrit *panthā*, etc. In the Vedas and the Avesta the stem of these words is frequently used in a religious sense of the path between men and gods or between men and the world of the dead. In the R̥gveda there is even a compound *pathikṛt*, 'path-making', which is used as an epithet of several divine and semi-divine persons to indicate their services in keeping open the 'path of the gods'. Now, put in mystic phrase, that is about what the Roman *pontifices* did in superintending the Roman religion as a whole and seeing that both priests and laity observed the established procedure.

The first element of *pontifex*, then, originally had the meaning of 'path between this world and the other'. The compound must have originated in very ancient times before the primitive mysticism had faded out of the Roman religion. The connection of the *pontifices* with the *Pons Sublicius* is probably due to the change in the meaning of *pons*. At the time when the first rude bridge was built over the Tiber it was named 'the road on piles' (since it was the only bridge, the adjective would have been otiose if *pons* had meant 'bridge'). Gradually, and perhaps just on account of its use in the phrase *Pons Sublicius*, *pons* gained its historical meaning; at the same time *pontifices* found in their name a claim to authority over the bridge.

3. SATURA

See Ullman, *Classical Philology* 8(1913).172 ff. The connection of the word with the adjective *satur* has long been recognized, but the precise character of the connection has not been understood. The ancient authorities all use *satura* as a noun; see e.g. Festus: *Satura et cibi genus et lex multis aliis legibus conferta*. . . . The original meaning of the noun seems to have been the one which Festus mentions first. What the dish was appears from a passage where Diomedes derives the use of *satura* as the name of a literary genre, a quodam genere farciminis, quod multis rebus refertum saturam dicit Varro vocitatum. He goes on to cite from Varro's